

# DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

## news release

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE  
Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife

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### AGENCIES MOVE TO PROTECT RARE FERRET

State and Federal agencies have taken new action to protect wildlife species declared endangered by Secretary of the Interior Walter J. Hickel.

The State of South Dakota and the U.S. Departments of the Interior and Defense have signed a cooperative agreement aimed at protecting the black-footed ferret on 42,000 acres being retained by the U.S. Air Force on the Badlands Gunnery Range in southwest South Dakota.

The agreement was authorized under the Sikes Act, a Federal law which provides for fish and wildlife management on all Department of Defense lands.

The black-footed ferret, a small member of the weasel family which may be one of the rarest of the endangered species, is closely associated with prairie dogs, often using the same burrows. The Air Force's Badlands Gunnery Range is one of the few places these ferrets have been seen recently in North America.

Under the pact, control of prairie dog populations would be carried out or supervised by Interior's Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife only if the prairie dog "towns" threaten to spread beyond the exterior boundaries of the gunnery range, and only then if agreed upon by all three agencies.

The agreement also permits on-site research on any endangered species by any of the three agencies. It also prohibits known prairie dog "towns" from being used as impact areas by military units training on the gunnery range.

Assistant Secretary Leslie L. Glasgow, who heads Interior's programs for fish, wildlife and parks, said the agreement is "an example of the cooperative attitude between the military and civilian agencies of Government in helping to save the nation's wildlife and its habitat."

Signing the pact for the three agencies were Regional Director Robert W. Burwell of the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, State Game and Fish Director Robert Hodgins for the State and Col. Alexander J. Kisselburgh, commander of Ellsworth Air Force Base at Rapid City.

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